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FACTORS AND POLICIES ASSOCIATED WITH
RURAL WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN
IRAQI EXTENSION CENTERS

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Abstract: Data from the program participants of eight randomly selected rural extension centers in the Baghdad, Iraq, area are used to examine factors associated with rural women's participation levels in extension programs and to assess the fit between stated and implemented social policies related to extension programs. Findings suggest that: (1) family-related variables and those indicative of social customs surrounding the female status are most closely related to women's participation levels; and (2) there are discrepancies between written and enacted social policies related to extension programs. Possible explanations for findings are offered as are cultural, political, and structural directions for aligning policy and practice.

FACTORS AND POLICIES ASSOCIATED WITH RURAL WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN IRAQI EXTENSION CENTERS¹

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

Developmental theorists and/or researchers generally agree that: (1) no segment of society is less receptive to societal efforts to induce political, economic, and social change than are the uneducated rural masses (El Fathaly, Palmer, and Chackerian 1977); (2) active women's organizations facilitate changes in communities and societies (United Nations 1965); and (3) one of the predominate methods of educating rural people with respect to desired societal changes has historically been agriculture extension (Mauder 1972; Sanders 1966).²

Recognizing the importance of these three factors to development, the postrevolutionary Iraqi government proposed and implemented a plan for creating Rural Extension Centers (Al-jabouri 1978:69). The goals of the extension program were patterned after the United Nations (1965) model with some adjustments by the Iraqi government. Basically, the program focused on increasing women's knowledge, skills, and/or participation in the areas of agriculture, home economics, education, and politics. These programs were to be offered to rural adult Iraqi women on a voluntary basis. It was believed that active participation in such programs would assist in breaking down social barriers that have prevented rural women from taking an active role in community affairs and overall development plans. As the success of such programs is largely dependent upon participation of the target population (Sanders 1966; Michaelson 1976; Leagan and Loomis 1971), knowledge of factors that facilitate or hinder the participation of rural women, in extension programs should be of utmost importance, particularly to those concerned with rural development policy. Based on this information, this study has two primary objectives: (1) to examine factors associated with rural women's level of participation in extension programs; and (2) to evaluate these findings in terms of social policies related to rural women and extension programs. To accomplish the objectives, relevant literature and theory is reviewed and data from interviews with the total population of eight randomly selected extension centers in the Baghdad area are examined.

DEFINITION AND DESCRIPTION OF CONCEPTS

Extension Programs

Extension, in its broadest sense, may be defined as the extending of a service or a system that extends the education advantages of an institution to persons unable to participate in a normal manner (Farquhar 1972). Various studies by the United Nations (1965) indicate that extension of development programs serve as the vehicle through which women make the transition from a life limited to home activities to wider interests, including participation in national and/or international concerns. Recognition of this can be found in statements made by the Iraqi Vice-President and the Minister of Agriculture (Al-Thawra August, 1977).

And the specific principles and steps for planning the extension program in Iraq were outlined in the Guide for the Rural Woman.

The program and its activities should be based on the facts that consider the different daily seasonal activities carried out by rural women and make no conflict between time of the program and the rural woman's activities on the farm. This study should be taken as a basis for identification of problems and needs of the rural people . . . flexibility should be considered to adjust the program according to the conditions. The priority of need should also be considered (Iraq Ministry of Agriculture 1976:14).

The organizational structure of the extension programs was to consist of a single line of authority running from the director of extension to extension workers and then to the rural membership. Extension workers would be in charge of carrying out the program. Under the extension workers, who frequently had college degrees in relevant areas, were rural leaders. These leaders were to have at least a sixth grade education, be from villages where the program centers were located, and be respected, successful, experienced housewives.

Social Participation and Voluntary Organizations

Once policy, goals, and organizational structure are established, the success of any program is dependent upon the social participation of the target population. For purposes of this paper, social participation is defined as:

. . . a social process in which individuals identify themselves with a particular activity or program. It may vary from mere passive attendance at a meeting to intense interest involving systematic overt behavior, such as carrying on a discussion or planning a meeting (Hoffer 1944:6).

Because participation in extension programs is voluntary, we use the sociological definition of formal voluntary organizations -- private, nonprofit, organizations having members who join and are free to leave by their own choice (Gibbons 1969). While extension programs are not private organizations, they can be defined as nonprofit and having a voluntary membership. Thus, many of the factors that influence individuals' participation levels in extension programs should be similar to those of formal voluntary organizations, particularly organizations in rural communities.

THEORY AND REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Social participation in organizations and programs varies by demographic characteristics. Hoffer observed that rural people:

. . . are influenced by a variety of conditions that are beyond the direct control of the county agricultural agent or of the

farmers themselves, but each condition tends to affect their participation in a favorable way, or causes rural people to be less likely to take part in agricultural extension activities or use extension services (1944:1).

Hoffer's observations are particularly applicable to rural women in Iraq. That is, we assume that their participation in organizations outside the home will rely heavily upon external conditions such as traditional social customs that remain imbedded in rural Moslem communities (see O'Kelly 1980:218-224) and that are beyond the control of those in charge of programs or the participants themselves. A further discussion of this point will be postponed until the findings of the present study are reviewed.

Static and Dynamic Factors in Organizational Participation

Beal (1956:250), in a study of participation in a statewide sample of farmers' cooperatives in Iowa, distinguished between "static and dynamic" factors in terms of the effect these would have on organizational or program participation. Beal (1956) defines static factors as considerations such as age, education, and marital status. These alone, however, were not viewed as sufficient to guide voluntary organizations in attempts to predict and/or increase participation levels.³ Dynamic factors such as the members' perceptions of organizational benefits, identification with the organization, and decision making were expected and were found to be highly related to member participation. Beal (1956) defined these factors as dynamic because group members, leaders, and professional workers could bring about a change in them. He cites the importance of using dynamic factors to: (1) broaden the scope of social participation research to include new variables that will allow for more complete analysis of the factors related to participation; (2) include factors that seem more likely to be significantly related to social participation and other variables; and (3) enable research workers to determine causality.

Static Factors and Research Findings

A number of researchers have examined the effect of age on participation in voluntary organizations (Mayo 1950; Mayo and Marsh 1952; Foskett 1955; Larson 1938). Viewing the relevant studies as a whole, however, there is no clear-cut statistical relationship between age and organizational participation.

Education, another factor that has been hypothesized as having an influence on activity in voluntary organizations, also shows mixed research findings in terms of its relationship to levels of organizational participation (Hoffer 1944; Foskett 1955; Hyman and Wright 1971).

Other static variables that have been used to explain organizational participation are employment and income (Hyman and Wright 1971; Babchuk and Booth 1969). These studies, however, also demonstrate mixed findings

between the two independent variables and organizational participation. Similarly, mixed findings have been reported for the effect of marital status on participation levels (Babchuk and Booth 1969).

Several researchers have examined the effects of family-related variables on individuals' participation in voluntary organization. Anderson (1944), for example, found that rural families in the U.S. behave as a unit. Either all the family participates in an organization in some way or none participate. While this finding is relevant only to those organizations in which all family members ten years of age or older could participate, it suggests the importance of the family as a factor in determining organizational participation.

Mayo (1950) reported that lower participation among the 20 to 30 age group could be traced to family factors. Adults in families with very young children, for example, tend to participate in voluntary organizations less than adults in other types of families. This is particularly relevant for women as they have traditionally been charged with childcare and home-related duties.

Another family factor that influences women's participation outside the home is family size. Employment studies (e.g., Sweet 1973; Hudis 1976; Hoffman and Nye 1974; Oppenheimer 1970), indicate that large families and young children in the home reduce women's labor market participation.

The fact that family-related factors tend to have significant effects on women's outside activities should be particularly relevant to the present study's sample of Iraqi women who live in rural areas and in a country where the family is important and exerts much influence on individual behavior (O'Kelly 1980:219-221).

Dynamic Factors and Research Findings

One of the most common assumptions about organizations is that individuals participate in them in return for some benefit. March and Simon (1958) noted that, according to the Bernard-Simon theory of organizational equilibrium, a person's motivation to participate in an organization is a function of valued inducements provided by the organization and the individual's perceptions of other alternatives available to him/her. Studies relating participation to benefits, however, indicate a moderate degree of association (e.g., Beal 1956).

Warner and Heffernan (1967) also explored the relationship between benefits and membership participation. In their study, the more organizational benefits were dependent upon member participation, the more members took part. Based on the assumption that the extent to which member benefits are dependent on some particular activity or contribution of the member, two hypotheses were formulated: (1) the greater the number of benefits, the greater the participation, and (2) the greater the degree of benefit-participation contingency, the greater the participation. Ambiguous

results regarding the relationship between the number of benefits and participation were obtained, although the hypothesis regarding the benefit contingency and participation was supported.

Much has been written about the positive relationship of member identity and member participation. Beal (1956) used specific words, such as "we," "our," and "us," to indicate identity. He found participation scores higher among those who identified with the group than among those who did not. Rogers, Heffernan, and Warner (1972) also found the identification effect on role performance in organizations lasted much longer than an income effect. Thus, the association between organizational identification and participation seems to be positive.

Beal (1956) examined the relationship between levels of participation in cooperatives and members' perceptions of decision making opportunities. He found statistically significant differences in participation between those who said they had "some" and those who said they had "no" input into running cooperatives.

In sum, it appears that dynamic factors do have an effect on organizational participation, but the effect of static factors is less clear. Nevertheless, we believe that static factors such as marital status, age, and family-related variables will influence rural Iraqi women's participation in extension programs. Both types of variables are therefore included in the survey instrument.

METHODS

Sample and Data Collection

Eight extension centers located in eight villages surrounding Baghdad were randomly selected from 20 centers.⁴ All 250 members of the extension centers were included in the study population. The second author, who is Iraqi, collected the data from all extension members during the summer of 1977.⁵ Each subject was interviewed individually in her respective center. Prior to these interviews, about 30 minutes were spent with each group explaining the purpose of the study, providing relevant information (e.g., voluntary participation, anonymity, etc.) and answering questions. The average number of subjects interviewed per day was 12, with each interview lasting about 15 minutes. Good rapport was established and all subjects willingly cooperated.

Study Instrument, Variable Measurement, and Method of Analysis

The personal interview method was chosen because the majority of respondents were illiterate and there were no telephones in the villages where the extension centers were located.

The interview schedule consisted of 38 questions and was divided into two sections. The English version of the interview was translated into

Arabic by the second author who is fluent in both languages. No problems were encountered in the translation process. Following pretesting, four questions from the final schedule were dropped because they were irrelevant to the extension center programs.

The first section of the interview schedule was designed to gather information concerning respondents' evaluation of and participation in extension programs. The factors included subjects' interest in program activities, perceived benefit of program, identity with program, expressed value of program, perceived opportunity for decision making, level of participation in program, length of program affiliation, and distance from center.

The second section of the interview schedule consisted of demographic and attitudinal factors. These included age and marital status of subject, ages of children, family size, education, and occupation of head of household, whether subject had friends attending the program, and family members' attitudes toward the program.

Chi-Square,⁶ simple correlation and percentages were used in the data analysis. Findings are used to examine what factors influence rural Iraqi women's participation in extension center programs and to address the policy-related study objective.

FINDINGS

The findings section is divided into two parts. The first focuses on static and dynamic factors that are related to rural Iraqi women's participation in extension programs. The second examines factors that are used to assess the extent to which extension program policies are being implemented.

Static Variables and Participation

Findings presented in Table 1 indicate a significant inverse relationship ($\text{Gamma} = -.88$) between age and social participation -- the younger the age the greater the social participation. Specifically, about 74 percent of the group aged five to ten attended the program four or five days a week; in comparison, about 25% of those 11 to 17, 3% of those 17 to 23, and none of those 24 and older fell into these two participation categories.

Inverse relationships between the independent variables of marital status, family size, and distance from the center were also found ($-.88$; $-.88$; and $-.61$; respectively). The Chi-Square values are also significant ($P = .001$), indicating that categories within each variable differ significantly with respect to participation levels. Basically, the largest percentage of single women attended the program four to five days per week (58%), while the greatest percentage of married women (76%) attended only one to two days. Similar findings were noted with respect to family size

and distance from the center -- both factors were inversely associated with social participation.

Gammas associated with ages of children (.94) and education of head of household (.56) indicate a significant positive relationship between the dependent variable and each of these independent variables. Only a weak and nonsignificant relationship (.10) is found between attendance of friends at center and one's own participation level. Surprisingly, a significant negative relationship (-.49) was found between females' social participation in extension programs and whether the head of household was a farmer or nonfarmer -- social participation is higher when the male family head is a nonfarmer.

In sum, this group of findings indicates that the majority of individuals who attend the centers are between the ages of five and seventeen and that single women are more likely than married women to have higher participation rates in the extension programs, as are those women who live in smaller families and closer to the centers. In addition, women whose children are older, women whose husbands have higher education, and women whose husbands are nonfarmers have higher participation rates. Whether respondent's friends attend the program appears to have little effect on her own participation.

Dynamic Variables

With respect to findings related to dynamic variables, all Gammas shown in Table 1 are positive with the exception of: (1) "choice of activity attendance," which could not be measured because subjects had no choice with respect to activity participation; and, (2) "length of program affiliation," which is negatively associated with participation level. As can be seen from Table 1, all the relationships with the exception of "opportunity for discussion" and "choice of activity attendance" are statistically significant.

As a summary, this group of findings indicates that as perceived benefits and values of program, identification with the program, and perception of family's favorableness toward program increase so does participation level in the program, the more likely that their participation rates decreased. Opportunity for discussion seems to have little effect on program participation.

Policy-related Findings

A review of policies related to extension programs in Iraq indicated that the programs should: (1) serve the adult rural woman; (2) emphasize training in good nutrition and home and child care habits; (3) provide education classes aimed at eradicating illiteracy; (4) include education in simple sewing methods; and (5) provide information on the existing political party. Also included were guidelines related to organizational structure. These guidelines indicated that: (1) programs should have flexible

activities and times which were to be determined by the needs of the community and the population served by the center; (2) local leaders were to be women from the villages who were respected and experienced and who had at least a sixth grade education; (3) participants were to have opportunities for deciding what activities to attend and a chance for discussion with respect to how programs were administered (Al-jabouri 1979).

Findings presented in Table 2 indicate a general discrepancy between almost all of these policy goals and what is happening at the centers. First, participants in the programs tend to be children rather than the adult rural women for whom the program was planned. Over 75 percent (75.6%) of the participants were between the ages of 5 and 17.

Second, less than ten percent (6.4%) of those attending the programs view agriculture, family health, nutrition, and child development classes as the most interesting, although almost 50 percent (49.2%) think the classes related to literacy are the most interesting. About 45 percent (44.4%) view sewing as the most interesting. None view politics as being of great interest.

Third, only about 30 percent (29.6%) of the sample are attending the program for educational purposes. The remaining 70 percent (70.4) are attending for recreational or social reasons.

Fourth, no one in the sample said she had any choice with respect to making decisions about what activities she wanted to attend. Those who came to the center had to attend all activities. More of the respondents indicated that they had a chance to participate in class discussions (57.6%), however, than those reporting that they did not (42.4%).

Fifth, when questioned as to the value of the program, only slightly over 25 percent (25.8%) indicated it had "much" value, while about 70 percent (71.6%) indicated it had "some" value. Only a few thought it had "little" value (1.6%), and none thought it had "no" value.

Finally, participants were not totally satisfied with the program as is evident from the last finding presented in Table 2. Only 30 percent of the participants desired no program changes while 50 percent wanted to have fewer meetings or to have the time changed, and 20 percent wanted a new program. The second author also observed that: (1) the programs held daily meetings from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon without considering rural women's work schedules for seasonal variations; and, (2) leaders of the center were not from the villages where the centers were located but from surrounding towns, and they expressed discontent at being assigned to the centers.

DISCUSSION

These findings suggest that cultural, structural, and political factors must be considered in predicting and evaluating variable relationships. Both static and dynamic factors affect organizational participation in all

cultures but, without further research, we cannot predict which will be more significant in any particular context.

ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF CULTURE, STRUCTURE, ATTITUDES AND POLITICS ON EXTENSION PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Cultural Explanations

Cultural explanations may account for many of the differences between findings in the present study and similar studies done in the United States. We will discuss first the relationships between static variables and women's participation in extension programs. With respect to age, it was found in this study that participation levels varied substantially among age groups, and, surprisingly, the highest levels of participation occurred within the 5 to 10 year old group. This may be partly attributed to social customs in rural Iraq.

O'Kelly (1980:219-220) reports on social customs among the rural peasantry in Iraq where tradition remains strong. She indicates that young girls are allowed to run almost as freely as young boys until the age of 11. At that time they put on the veil and begin their life observance of purdah. They are isolated in the women's quarters and should not associate openly with nonkinsmen again. Evidence of these customs in the Middle East is further documented by Perestiany (1965) and Miller (1982:779-780), and in view of these customs, it is not surprising that the greatest participation in extension programs is among young girls 5 to 10 years of age. This is, however, inconsistent with the policy objectives of rural extension programs, i.e., that the program is designed to educate rural adult Iraqi women.

The reason for the lower attendance in the remaining age groups may be also traceable to customs and traditions surrounding marriage. In rural Iraq, females are typically married earlier in life than in many parts of the United States. Al-jabouri (1978:58) reports that by age 16 women have typically entered the stage involving marriage and family responsibilities. As marriage is the only respected adult role for village women, and a good reputation, chastity, and virginity (O'Kelly, 1980:221) are essential for marriage--and even life--it is not surprising that participation in public activities, such as the extension program, decline as women prepare for and/or enter marriage and family life stages.

Another reason for the decreasing program participation of women after the age of ten is that in rural areas women are the symbol of male honor. A family's reputation and status in the community depend on the chastity of daughters and sisters. Rural people are, therefore, suspicious and mistrusting of families whose women leave the home each day.

A significant association was also found between family members approval of extension programs and the extent of women's participation (Gamma = .63). The women reported that family members' attitudes toward their participation also affected their frequency of program attendance.

Structural/Attitudinal Variables

The results of this study show an inverse relationship between family size and participation in extension programs. Generally, larger families mean more work for women, thus decreasing time available for outside activities. In Iraq, this may also indicate that there are a number of elders in the family who are oriented toward tradition and disapprove of females in the family participating in public activities. It may also reflect a resistance to what could be perceived by elders in the rural areas as a program of political indoctrination rather than one designed to improve the status of women or the rural community.

Age of children was negatively associated with participation in extension programs. This is congruent with what one would expect. In almost all societies women have been assigned the task of caring for children, particularly when they are young.

Another factor that may be related to the greater program participation of the youngest age group is the division of labor in farm families. It was found that most young girls in the 5 to 10 year old group were cow or sheep keepers. They took the animals out to graze around 6:00 a.m. and were back by 9:00 a.m. They did not repeat this activity again until afternoon, which allowed them time to attend extension programs. Women in older age categories were involved in various types of farm and home labor that conflicted with the program time (Al-jabouri 1978:58). This again contradicts extension center policies which indicate that program scheduling should be flexible, taking into consideration rural women's home and work schedules.

Still another factor that may account for greater program participation among the 5 to 10 year group is the fact that there were no public schools in the villages. Extension programs, therefore, served as alternatives to public education. This seems logical when viewed from the Barnard-Simon theory of organizational equilibrium, i.e., a person's motivation to participate in an organization, but other available alternatives for obtaining such inducements. Where there are no schools, extension centers provide the only alternative to education for the young, while, for the older women extension programs obviously do not serve as much of an inducement for participation.

Finally, extension centers may serve as a place for social interaction with peers -- interaction uninterrupted by the usual close supervision of adult females (Al-jabouri 1978:83). This seems reasonable considering that over 70 percent of those in the eight centers reported their reasons for attending were recreational and social. Some women did, in fact, mention in the interview that this was the only place they could legitimately visit their friends because visiting was considered a waste of time and/or after the age of ten they were not allowed to associate with nonkinsmen, even though the women may have been friends earlier.

Tradition seems to be somewhat eroded by education. That is, a positive relationship was found between the educational level of the male head of household and participation of women in extension programs. This finding supports previous studies in the U.S. noted earlier in this paper.

Women also had higher participation scores when the male head was a nonfarmer than when he was a farmer. Several factors may account for this. First, there may be less work for women in rural areas when all or part of the family income comes from nonfarm sources. It was found that, when the family is 100 percent dependent on farm income, about 70 percent of the work is done by women. Second, men who have jobs away from the rural area may be exposed to more societal changes relative to women's roles and, thus, be more open to women in their families attending extension programs (Friedl 1980). And, third, women may gain more autonomy in families where the male head is away from the home part of the time.

The distance that women lived from extension centers influenced their participation. Almost all women reported that they had to walk to the centers due to poor road conditions and/or lack of transportation (Al-jabouri 1978:55). Thus, it is not surprising that the further away they lived, the less frequently they attended the program.

Whether or not women had friends attending programs at the extension center had little effect on their own attendance levels. This was surprising, but true for all age groups (Table 1). It suggests the strength of family influence and/or social custom over the influence of peers.

The attitudinal variable that had the greatest effect on levels of participation was the extent to which women identified with the program. Those who identified with the program had higher levels of participation. This finding tends to support studies by Beal (1956) and by Rogers, Hefferman, and Warner (1972) with respect to the relationship between organizational identity and organizational participation.

The findings of the study also show that perceptions of program benefit and value are associated to a lesser extent with participation than that of identity. This finding partially supports Beal (1956), who found only a moderate association between members' perception of benefits and their social participation. The differences within categories of each group for each variable are significant, however, indicating that women's participation levels are significantly influenced by the extent to which they view the program as offering benefits and the degree of value they place on it.

Length of program affiliation was negatively associated with program participation. The difference among groups was also statistically significant, indicating that those who attended the programs the longest had significantly lower participation rates. When questioned about this finding, some members replied that the programs currently being offered had not changed since the first day they attended. They queried as to why they

should attend every day, when they already knew everything (Al-jabouri 1978:53-54).

Beal (1956) found that members who perceive themselves as having "some" rather than "no" opportunity for sharing in decision making had significantly higher participation scores. The findings of this study do not support this. No significant differences were found between groups with respect to opportunities to participate in discussions and their frequency of attendance ($\Gamma = .05$). One possible explanation of this finding may be that members felt their suggestions were not considered even when they were allowed to verbally participate in discussions. For example, during the interview process, some of the respondents mentioned that one of the local leaders whom they liked very much was transferred. They requested that she be returned to their center and even threatened to stop attending the program if she wasn't. Their request was not honored (Al-jabouri 1978:79).

In summary, the variables that appear to have the greatest influence on levels of women's participation in extension programs are family related and/or those associated with social customs pertaining to the female status. It also appears that in rural Iraq, factors that Beal (1956) described as "static" (e.g., age, marital status, distance) are more important than those he defined as "dynamic" (e.g., organizational identity, perceived benefits). One exception is identity with the program. This plays an important role in determining women's levels of program participation -- the more they identify with the program the more they attend.

EXTENSION PROGRAMS, SOCIAL POLICY, AND POLITICS

These findings indicate that existing extension programs do not reflect the policies upon which they were established. The programs were designed to educate the rural adult woman. The target age group is not being reached since 70 percent of the participants are below 16 years of age.

The programs were designed to educate rural women in agricultural production, health, nutrition, and child development. These, however, were the areas that the participants found of least interest. This finding is not surprising given that a substantial proportion of the center populations were children who would be more interested in social interaction. Almost 70 percent of the respondents said they attended the centers for social or recreational reasons -- not the educational one for which the programs were designed.

Further indications that policies were not being implemented include: leaders were from surrounding towns or cities, not from local villages; no provisions were made to adjust the program times to adult work roles or seasonal variations; programs appeared to be repeated many times without any changes or attempts to meet the needs of the target population; and members appeared to feel they had little influence on center decisions. In sum, a large gap exists between stated and implemented policy.

Social Policy and Politics

While social customs, structural variables, and attitudes may partially explain the gap between stated and implemented social policies surrounding rural women's participation in extension centers, Iraqi politics may be an equal or greater determinant. Politically, agrarian reform as part of the larger societal development plan has for decades been of concern to various Iraqi regimes.

Since the implementation of the Agrarian Reform Law of 1958, little progress has been made toward social and economic development of rural areas. Political indecision and administrative naivete contributed to a decline in agriculture production, particularly of such essential commodities as rice, wheat, and barley (Simmons 1965:131-132).

Regimes since the Quasim government have failed to develop and implement policy to revitalize agrarian reform and halt the falling production. Simmons (1965:133) notes that this failure in agriculture development reflects an ongoing problem. Specifically, he identifies a number of political decisions that contribute to continuous failure in agriculture development.

Past attempts by governments to organize the villagers politically and indoctrinate their children have disillusioned them so that they have long ago lost faith in the government promises to help. Extension suggestions which have led to destruction of crops has lowered esteem for government. Thus, the prevailing attitude of villagers toward the government seems to be one of mistrust (Simmons 1965:134).

The failure of several regimes to enhance the social and economic welfare of rural people has, no doubt, reduced confidence in the merit and value of the extension centers and the womens programs. Mistrust of the government's desire and ability to improve the status of rural women through extension could explain why so few members of the targeted population are taking part in the programs. This attitude of mistrust may also be reflected in the finding that "none" of the women participating viewed politics as being of great interest to them.

Simmons (1965) also states that the patronizing attitude of the Iraqi administrators allows for little constructive thought, and the need for carefully considering the villagers' creative participation from the earliest planning stages is overlooked.

These observations by Simmons seem relevant to the present study for several reasons. First, we noted that subjects had no choice with respect to what program activities they wished to attend. If they came to the center, they had to attend all of the activities, whether or not they viewed them as relevant or of any value.

Second, when questioned as to the value of the program, only slightly over 25 percent (25.8%) indicated it had "much" value, while about 70 percent (71.6%) indicated it had "some" value. Only a few thought it had "little" value (1.6%), and none thought it had "no" value.

Third and fourth, there was no consideration rural women's work schedules or seasonal variations, and leaders of the center usually were not from the villages where the centers were located.

In summary, there seems to be little realization among policymakers that villagers must be included in program planning.

SUMMARY AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE PLANNING AND RESEARCH

Taken as a whole, the present findings indicate that the variables, such as family size, program content, and identification with program, proposed in the United States by Hoffer (1944), Beal (1956), March and Simon (1958) and others, do have some effect on women's participation in rural extension centers in Iraq. It appears, however, that cultural, political, and structural variables may explain more of the variation in women's participation levels. The findings in this specific study also seem to reflect many of the same endemic to the general area of development (United Nations 1980). In addition, there seems to be little correspondence between written and implemented policy in the extension program. With this in mind, the following recommendations are offered in three broad areas -- cultural, structural, and political.

Cultural Variables

1) There must be an even stronger attempt than already exists to change traditional attitudes toward women's nature, roles, capabilities and duties in society and the family. The Law of Personal Status, initiated in 1977 and revised in 1978 (Ismael 1980), may have some effect in this area, but unless there is greater correspondence between this written policy and actual practice, then it will probably have minimal impact and rural adult women will continue to be prohibited from taking part in rural extension center programs. This is an area where the Iraqi Women's Union could play an even greater role than it does currently.

2) The data did not specifically indicate the role that the extended family plays in regulating women's participation in the rural extension centers, but we can speculate that it may be considerable as almost all women attending the center were living in extended families. Further indications of the effect that extended family members may have on controlling women's participation were the statistically significant findings that women from smaller families had greater participation levels in the programs and that family members attitudes toward the program

significantly influenced participation. While the breakdown of the extended family and their tribal alliances is part of the Ba'ath party policy (Ismael 1980), it appears that there is still much work to do in the rural areas. Perhaps this will take place as younger generations receive more education. Until then, the government will have to initiate even stronger policies and laws to break down the power of the extended family if national programs are to work.

Structural Variables

An integrated approach must be developed among all parts of the system involved in the extension or any type of development programs - i.e., among those who make, implement, administer, and evaluate policies and programs, as well as the participants. Until there is communication and coordination among these parts, extension programs for women, as well as other aspects of agrarian reform, will remain ineffectual.

Political Variables

Following from the above, Iraqi administrators must change their attitudes and practices of imposing policies from above (Simmons 1965). They must realize the ineffectiveness of this method and carefully ensure villagers' creative participation from the very earliest stages. This method may also serve to reduce the power of the extended family as people would be integrated into the development planning and, thus, might work with rather than against the party.

The government should also work to reestablish trust among the villagers. That is, the villagers must realize that the proposed changes and programs are for their benefit, rather than solely political. This can only take place when the above noted political attitudes change. The government must also demonstrate competency in program suggestions and implementation if it is to gain the respect and confidence of the rural population.

In conclusion, the findings from this study indicate that rural extension projects in Iraq will succeed only when (1) cultural traditions that inhibit women's participation are broken down; (2) political policies related to development are actually followed through, rather than only written down; (3) more evaluation studies related to the success of programs are undertaken and the results heeded with respect to criticisms and suggestions for improvement; and, (4) a totally integrated program of all aspects of society involved in various development programs is instituted. While these suggestions are not new and can be applied to all development programs, what would be new would be for governments in developing countries to take the suggestions seriously. Perhaps, with the decline in oil revenue and the costs of maintaining the Iran-Iraq War, Iraq will be forced to begin

evaluating the congruence between statement and implementation of policies. From an economic perspective, it could be predicted that inefficient programs would either be changed or terminated. And, we can only hope that this criterion would be applied to all programs, not just to those that focus on women.

TABLE 1

GAMMA AND CHI-SQUARE VALUES DEPICTING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN
DEPENDENT VARIABLE OF RURAL IRAQI WOMEN'S SOCIAL
PARTICIPATION IN EXTENSION PROGRAMS AND INDEPENDENT
STATIC AND DYNAMIC VARIABLES (N = 250)

Independent Variables	Gamma	χ^2	d.f.
<u>Static Variable</u>			
Age	-.88	258.65***	12
Marital Status	-.88	77.39***	8
Family Size	-.61	101.80***	16
Distance From Center	-.74	62.91***	8
Ages of Children ^a	.94	78.09***	4
Education of Head of Household	.56	43.20***	4
Attendance of Friends at Center	.10	4.24	4
Head of Household Farmer vs. Nonfarmer	-.49	40.20***	4
<u>Dynamic Variables</u>			
Perceived Benefit of Program	.20	23.49*	12
Identification with Program	.73	18.90**	4
Perceived Value of Program	.25	22.79**	8
Perceived Attitudes of Family Members Toward Program	.63	19.57***	4
Choice of Activity Attendance ^b		--	--
Opportunity for Discussion	.05	1.92	4
Length of Program Affiliation	-.65	100.36***	16

* = .05, ** = .01; *** = .001

a For the "Ages of Children" variable, N = 38.

b For reasons explained in the Findings section, data on this variable are not available.

TABLE 2
**FACTORS USED IN EVALUATING RURAL EXTENSION PROGRAMS
 WITH RESPECT TO RELEVANT POLICY GUIDELINES (N = 250)**

Variable	Categories	Percentages
Age of Subject	5 - 10	45.20
	11 - 16	30.40
	17 - 23	22.80
	24 - 27	1.60
Activity of Greatest Interest	Agriculture	1.60
	Family Health & Nutrition	1.60
	Child Development	3.20
	Literacy	49.20
	Sewing	44.40
	Public Affairs (Politics)	--
Purpose of Attending Center	Educational	29.60
	Recreational	38.00
	Social	32.40
Choice in Decision Making	Yes	--
	No	100.00
Chance for In-Class Discussion	Yes	57.60
	No	42.40
Expressed Value of Program	Much Value	26.80
	Some Value	71.60
	Little Value	1.60
	No Value	--
Expressed Type of Program Changes	Renew Program	20.00
	Change Program Time	24.00
	Have Fewer Meetings	26.00
	No Change Desired	30.00

NOTES

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the International Sociological Association Meeting, Mexico City, MEXICO, 1982.
2. A number of other approaches to rural development are also used. These include the system approach, the action-research approach, the minimum package approach, the credit approach, the land-grant college system approach, and the infrastructure approach (Michaelson 1976:54).
3. In Seal's study, significant relationships with participation were found for only two of 16 static factors, but significance was reached for all ten dynamic factors.
4. The villages were homogenous with regard to population characteristics such as general education of inhabitants, major occupations of heads of household, standards of living, religion, race, and family pattern, i.e., extended family.
5. Some might argue that things may have changed since this data was gathered. Given that the Iran-Iraq war started shortly after this data and still continues, if any changes have transpired it would be in a negative direction. This is based on the assumption that most of the Iraqi resources has been poured into war-related activities and materials.
6. Where applicable, corrections for continuity were made (Blalock 1960:220-221).

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